LOCAL NEWS

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No. 45—101st YEAR VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1959 SECOND NEWS SECTION

### For Small-Income Owners

## *Home Grant Boost Hinted*

Waldo Skillings, close friend of Premier Bennett, appeared to hint yesterday at the possibility of the $28 provincial home-owners' grant being increased for small-income owners of old homes.

Chairman of the court of revision on Victoria assessments, Mr. Skillings said at one point during hearings that he felt an adjustment would be coming along in the future, that something would have to be done about the old homes.

Later, the Rev. Laura Butler, appearing with a pensioner who said she found it difficult to save enough money for taxes, asked the court if there wasn't some humane channel through which this widow and other pensioners could keep their homes.

The only way, Mr. Skillings suggested, would be through an increase in the home-owners' grant to "one specific category" of owner.

He recalled that there had been criticism of the $28 grant because it was given only to home-owners, but suggested that pensioners could organize an appeal to the government.

Joseph Casey, former reeve of Saanich and another member of the court, said he thought Mr. Skillings had made a good suggestion.

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*Welfare*

## Skillings Cabinet Bound?

Speculation about whether Waldo Skillings will be named new minister of welfare or to another cabinet post was made in the legislature yesterday by Gordon Dowding (CCF-Burnaby).

Mr. Dowding questioned the reason Waldo Skillings accompanied the premier on his trip to Ottawa.

"Is he the B.C. government representative, or is he going to be the premier's new executive assistant or created a minister of travel?" asked Mr. Dowding.

"I guess the only place he didn't go was in the chamber of the Prime Minister. Maybe we have a new announcement pending . . . is someone going to resign over there and Mr. Skillings become a minister?

"I hope we find out before the budget," Mr. Dowding said.

WALDO SKILLINGS
. . . they did so much

*Assessment Study Begins*

## Oldsters Can't Pay But Court Can't Help

A court of revision on assessments has no power to consider inability to pay taxes, a sympathetic court repeatedly told complaining ratepayers yesterday at city hall.

But just as frequently, as the court worked its way through the first 30 of nearly 130 city cases on its list, it heard, "I can't afford to pay more taxes."

That, and more touching variations:

"I'm a disability pensioner. That doesn't count for anything now, but it counted when we went over in 1914."

"I'm a widow, and even with the $28 home-owner's grant, I find it difficult to save enough for taxes."

"We came into our home 46 years ago when it was finished. We brought up our children and put them through school without assistance from the government, like the family allowance. It comes hard to build extra fancy schools. . . ."

But the court answered that it could consider only the fairness of the assessments, or valuations, in relation to other assessments and to market values in the past four years.

**FEELS IT KEENLY**

"No one feels more keenly than I do the position of you old-timers who had so much of the building up of our province and city," chairman Waldo Skillings told the couple last quoted.

"But we can only consider whether your property has been fairly assessed. The schools may have too many frills, but the court can't adjudicate on that."

Another 30 cases will be heard by the three-man court today in the Knights of Pythias Hall, 723 Cormorant.

## *'Come Home Joe' Quip Cheers Court of Revision*

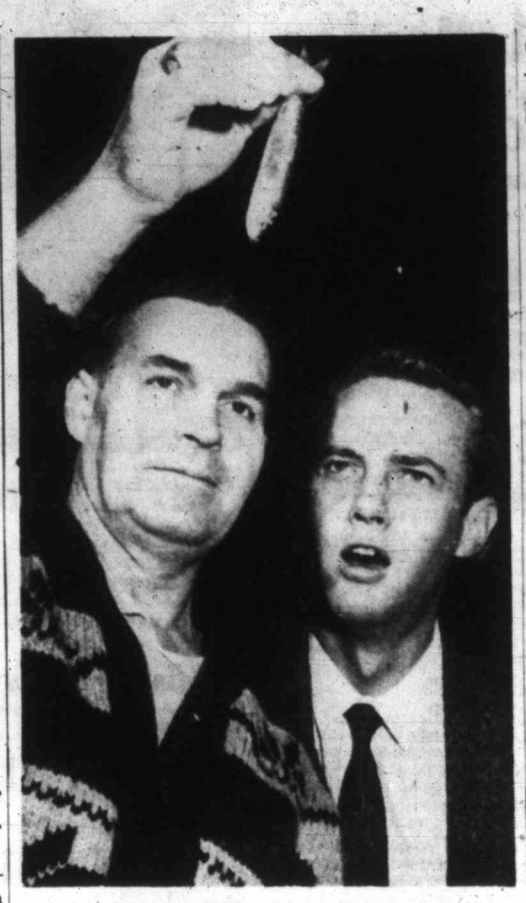
**Occasional laughter cheered up the proceedings yesterday as a court of revision considered complaints about city assessments.**

**A Burnside resident, for instance, claimed that billboards across the road were devaluing her property.**

**"Now I look out on 'Come Home Joe,' whoever he is," she said.**

**The chuckles had already started when a cry of "That's me!" came from Joseph Casey, former reeve of Saanich and a member of the court.**

**The court refused to lower the assessment.**



## This Won't Help Much

Hoping to supplement his "pensioner's diet", Colonist reporter Ted Shackleford went down to Gorge yesterday to get some tips on herring fishing. Before his stint of living for month on $55 ends, he expects to do better than did Jim Erdman, 654 Pine. Many old pensioners regularly catch their breakfast just below Gorge bridge. — (Colonist photo.)

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### They Wouldn't Wait

## *I May Cross Herring Off My List*

By TED SHACKLEFORD

**Colonist reporter Ted Shackleford has been assigned to live on $55 for a month to discover how senior citizens on old-age assistance payments live and what their problems are.**

**He will be available in The Daily Colonist office—EV 3-4111 — between 4 and 5 p.m. each day.**

Maybe the Gorge herring get up earlier than I do, but by the time I got there yesterday afternoon they'd all gone somewhere else.

I had hoped to get a few tips from some of the pensioners who fish there regularly, but even they had gone. Jim Erdman, 654 Pine Street, was there but he only had a four-inch herring to show me.

I guess I'll just have to cross herring off my menu unless I can get down there earlier. I'll try again soon.

Last night I had the first of the two meals out that I have allowed myself during this month.

It was the most international meal I've ever had. It began with hors d'oeuvres of Polish head cheese, Scotch broth, Swiss steak with Canadian vegetables and American blueberry pie with ice cream. Washed down with two cups of coffee.

It was the first hearty meal I've had since I began this assignment a week ago.

Today I go right back again to my own cooking.

Breakfast yesterday morning was shredded wheat, two eggs with two slices of bacon and two cups of tea. Lunch consisted of three cinnamon buns (12 cents) and a 10-cent cup of hot chocolate from a vending machine.

I'm not too sure what I'll eat today, but breakfast will probably be the same as yesterday.

**LOT OF COMMENT**

The food list published yesterday has caused a lot of comment on the inclusion of liquid milk and butter. True, powdered milk and margarine can be bought more cheaply, but almost all the prices on the list are high, deliberately.

*Confidence*

## Two Votes Lost

British Columbia's Social Credit government handily weathered two non-confidence votes in the legislature yesterday.

After a bitter attack on Provincial Secretary Wesley Black, during which he charged Mr. Black with "deliberate suppression" of mental health information and the government with placing debt reduction before human lives, Gordon Dowding (CCF, Burnaby) moved the first non-confidence motion.

His motion stated that "this House has lost confidence in the government because of its failure to provide adequate mental health facilities and the refusal to keep the House accurately informed." Division was called and the motion was lost 34-13 with all opposition members voting in favor.

All Socred members voted against the motion, and George Gregory (Lib., Victoria) claimed that about a dozen Socreds returned after divisions had been called and had not even heard the motion, and did not know what they were voting against.

Oak Bay Liberal Archie Gibbs proposed the second non-confidence motion which read "that this House regrets that government advisers have expended borrowed monies and taxes in a wasteful manner; they have been inattentive to the serious financial position of civic governments and school boards; and they have responded with callous indifference to the most serious charges upon their integrity."

The hour was nearly 6 p.m. and a vote by voice was taken with the nays far outweighing the ayes.

## House To Sit Tonight

There will be a night sitting of the legislature tonight, possibly starting at 8.30 p.m., and it is thought likely there will be another late sitting Thursday night as MLAs rush to finish the Throne Speech debate so Premier Bennett can present the budget Friday afternoon.

Scheduled to speak this afternoon, starting at 2, are Irvine Corbett (SC-Yale), Tony Gargrave (CCF-Mackenzie), Provincial Secretary Wesley Black (SC-Nelson-Creston), and Gordon Gibson (SC-Delta).

This evening Bert Price (SC-Vancouver-Burrard), George Massey (SC-Delta) and Melvin Bryan (Ind-North Vancouver) are scheduled to speak.

Winding up the debate Thursday will be Randolph Harding (CCF-Kaslo-Slocan), Health Minister Eric Martin (SC-Vancouver-Burrard), Arthur Turner (CCF-Vancouver East) and Mines Minister Kenneth Kiernan (SC-Chilliwack).

*Fountain Circle*

## Signals, Islands Revived

Idea of installing traffic signals and a new system of islands at Fountain Circle—but retaining two-way streets—was revived yesterday by public works committee of city council.

Council recently rejected a proposal by Ald. Hugh Ramsay that the plan recommended in 1957 by traffic expert Jackson Faustman be implemented. It called for one-way traffic on Douglas and Government as far south as Princess.

**LEADS ATTACK**

Public works committee, headed by Ald. Geoffrey Edgelow, who led the attack on the one-way plan, instructed the city engineer to bring in a report on a two-way plan.

Ald. Ramsay asked his fellow committee members if they thought they and the rest of the council would be happy with a two-way plan.

**LIGHTS THE CURE**

"I don't think there's anything there that lights can't cure," said Ald. Edgelow. "In other words, yes. If it's going to prevent accidents and improve the situation without one-way streets, I wouldn't oppose it."

"I think that's the ultimate thing that will be done," said Ald. Elmer McEwen.

BRIAN WARBURTON

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## *Seen In Passing*

**Brian Warburton** admiring a powerful-looking outboard motor. (He is a clerk for a city trust company and his hobby is boats. He is on the publicity committee for the Kinsmen Boat Show to be held at the Curling Rink April 16, 17 and 18.) . . . **Charlie Gibbard** walking home for lunch. . . . **Geoff Ellis** crossing Fort Street for a cup of coffee. . . . **Capt. George Turner** talking about a legal point. . . . **Lieut. Peter Stevens** relaxing in the mess. . . . **Max Chalk** talking about the 5th army band. . . . **Ralph McCall** looking at a hole in the street in front of his store. . . . **Tony Wilson** saying it looks good but costs too much.

*Power Starvation*

## Plan for Peace Out of 1980s CCFer Charges

Gordon Dowding (CCF-Burnaby) yesterday accused the provincial government of "plucking the Peace River development out of the 1980s where it properly belongs."

He said the Peace River is in the further reaches of undeveloped land and could properly wait for development until the Fraser and Columbia rivers have been developed for power.

"I want the opposition to remember that statement in 1980," Premier Bennett quipped across the floor of the House.

**WHEN WE NEED IT**

Mr. Dowding accused Lands and Forests Minister Williston of not pointing out the fact the Fraser River Board report indicated the Clearwater, a tributary of the North Thompson in the Fraser River system, could produce 1,000,000 horsepower "when we need it, where we need it and how we need it."

"Right in this report we have the basis to pull this province out of its power starvation. Why pluck out the Peace River?" Mr. Dowding asked.

**PUBLIC POWER**

He urged that when the Peace is developed, it be developed by public power and not by "a group of private profiteers."

He charged the government with "suppressing the expansion of the B.C. Power Commission" and demanded that Premier Bennett appear before the Shrum royal commission into power commission operations "because he is a central figure in the inquiry and he is involved."

**NOT DONE DUTY**

"If he does not appear to answer the statements he has made contradicting Mr. Briggs, he will not have done his duty to this province," Mr. Dowding charged.

He said the government stalls the BCPC efforts to reduce cost of its rates to consumers because "if the BCPC goes on the way it has been, it will give an even blacker eye to rates of the B.C. Electric."

He charged the B.C. Electric has been given the populated areas of the province to serve, while the BCPC has the sparsely populated areas.

Victoria should properly be served by the power commission, which serves the more-sparsely populated areas of Vancouver Island, he said.

He asked that the Public Utilities Commission be given more power to look into the activities of the B.C. Electric "and what it is doing to the province."

*Socreds Told:*

## Keep Your Word!

The Socred government has been asked to live up to its "promise" to institute a program of chronic hospital care under the benefits of B.C. Hospital Insurance.

Demand was made by the B.C. Progressive Conservative Association following the unanimous endorsement of a resolution presented by the Saanich Peninsula Progressive Conservative Association.

In speaking to the resolution, which was forwarded to Health and Welfare Minister Eric Martin, Mrs. Nora Lindsay, Saanich group chairman, said:

"It is high time that the minister of health and welfare honored his obligations to the people of B.C. and made available proper facilities for the treatment and rehabilitation of chronically-ill patients.

"Such a program will relieve the acute hospital bed shortage but, even more important, will enable chronic patients to obtain the type of treatment that will make it possible for them to retain a greater degree of independence."

*Brief Presented to Bonner*

## Driver Persecution Ratepayers' Claim

Aged drivers are being persecuted by Victoria's Motor Vehicles Branch, claims the Vancouver Island Ratepayers' Association.

A brief citing the "unnecessary and undesirable control" over drivers from 65 on was presented to Attorney-General Robert Bonner by association president George Bonner and vice-president W. C. Hamilton, Port Alberni alderman.

"We were well received by the attorney-general," said Mr. Bonner, "and he promised to do all he could to help older drivers."

Particularly hit in the brief were the growing list of tests and medical examinations for senior-citizen drivers.

The medical document itself was described as "astounding, amazing, stupefying, flabbergasting."

"The record shows," the brief said, "that older drivers have given little or no trouble as compared with the younger generation who are the cause of grave concern to us all in the matter of so many tragic and disastrous road accidents."

It was also urged that driver-examiners be more courteous.

"They should be required to show affability, kindness and cheerfulness when dealing with the elderly driver, avoiding all official abruptness.

"This should be a must in their training," the brief said.

## *Blood Flows*

**Victoria blood bank received 125 pints of blood yesterday during the first day of the three-day Red Cross drive.**

**The clinic at Red Cross House, 1046 Fort, will be held today from 1.30 to 4.30 p.m. and 7 to 9.30 p.m.**

**Final clinic will be held tomorrow at Canadian Services College, Royal Roads.**

### Key Taken First, Then Car

Melrose Service Ltd., 1609 Fort Street, are wondering if a "key" thief returned to find a car to match the key.

A car stolen from their lot Monday night matched one of several keys stolen when a thief broke into their building on Jan. 27, police were told yesterday.

## *Hunt Club Quits May 24 Bid, Roy, Trigger Invited for July*

Victoria Riding and Hunt Club has given up the chase after Royal Athletic Park for the May 24 holiday, but the group may still lasso Roy Rogers and Trigger at a later date.

"We didn't want to cause friction so we withdrew our application," said D. B. Carley, hunt club manager, last night.

There was some bucking last month when two riding clubs applied for the park on the same dates.

After both sides had their say, Greater Victoria Celebrations Association decided to get them together and iron the matter out. Hunt club was on one side and the Colwood Trail Riders and the Victoria Motorcycle Club on the other.

"There's no point in disharmony," said Mr. Carley, "so we decided to let them have the park."

The hunt club will still present a horse show, as in past years, at its Cedar Hill Crossroad property during the May celebrations.

"We've booked Athletic Park for July 1, 2, 3 and 4," said Mr. Carley, "and we hope to put on our big international horse show then."

He said Roy Rogers wouldn't have been able to appear in May in any event "because he's all booked up on television."

"However, we've invited him here for our proposed July show and we should know soon if he can make it."

Mr. Carley said "There's nothing too definite about the July show until we line up the feature attraction and make other arrangements."

## Society Elects Mrs. Livesay

Mrs. E. E. Livesay was elected president of the Vancouver Island John Howard Society at the annual meeting Monday.

M. V. Close and Newell Morrison were elected vice-presidents.

Directors include: Mrs. Betty Botterell, Michael Fraser, Alex Hendry, Dr. H. J. Lewis, Torrey McCall, Frank Steggles, Peter Taylor, Work Point chaplain A. J. McDonald, Rodney Taylor, Alfred Toone, Dr. C. D. Orchard and retiring president Hugh Ramsay.